

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BERLIN 01029 191209Z

43

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 SAJ-01 OMB-01 IO-14 DRC-01 /136 W

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R 191140Z JUN 74

FM USMISSION BERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3539

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO

CINCEUR FOR POLAD & OPS

CINCUSAREUR FOR POLAD, OPS & AEAGC-OCO

CINCUSAFE FOR POLAD & OPS

USELMLO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 1029

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, WB, GE, UR

SUBJECT: DETENTION OF US SOLDIERS IN EAST BERLIN

REF: BERLIN 1016

1. SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION OF JUNE 15 INCIDENT
INDICATES THAT UPON ARRIVING AT WALL, DRIVER OF US
VEHICLE REALIZED HIS ERROR AND ATTEMPTED TO BACK OUT
OF EAST BERLIN AND HAD SUCCEEDED IN GETTING ASTRIDE
THE LINE WHEN EAST GERMAN GUARD POINTED AUTOMATIC
WEAPON AT HIM AND ORDERED HIM TO MOVE FORWARD. DRIVER
THEN SHOWED EAST GERMAN OFFICER HIS ID CARD AND
DEMANDED SOVIET OFFICER. OFFICER MOTIONED FOR DRIVER
TO DISMOUNT AND WHEN HE REFUSED REACHED INTO CAR AND
REMOVED KEYS. AT ONE POINT DURING DETENTION WHEN
DRIVER ATTEMPTED TO LEAVE VEHICLE, GDR GUARD PUSHED DOOR
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PAGE 02 BERLIN 01029 191209Z

CLOSED.

2. ON JUNE 18, US PROTOCOL OFFICER DELIVERED FOLLOWING PROTEST TO SOVIET COUNTERPART:

QUOTE: AT APPROXIMATELY 1100 HOURS JUNE 15, 1974, TWO MEMBERS OF THE US FORCES IN A VEHICLE BEARING US FORCES LICENSE PLATES INADVERTENTLY DROVE A FEW FEET PAST THE LINE ON SONNENALLEE MARKING THE LIMIT OF THE UNITED STATES SECTOR OF BERLIN. WHEN THEY ATTEMPTED TO RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES SECTOR THEY WERE PREVENTED FROM DOING SO BY ARMED EAST BERLIN GUARDS WHO REMOVED THE KEYS FROM THE VEHICLE AND PLACED A PAVING BLOCK UNDER THE REAR WHEEL. IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT YOU AND COUNSELOR RODIN WERE NOTIFIED OF THIS INCIDENT BY THE UNITED STATES AUTHORITIES AT ABOUT 1200 HOURS AND THAT SOVIET OFFICIALS CAME TO THE CHECKPOINT AND WERE REQUESTED BY AN AMERICAN OFFICER TO SECURE THE MEN'S RETURN, THEY WERE DETAINED FORM ALMOST SEVEN HOURS.

MY AUTHORITIES HAVE INSTRUCTED ME TO PROTEST THIS ILLEGAL DETENTION OF MEMBERS OF THE US FORCES, THE USE OF FORCE AGAINST THEM BY THE EAST BERLIN GUARDS AND THE FAILURE OF THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES TO SECURE THEIR PROMPT RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES SECTOR. THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THAT THE US FORCES' RIGHT OF FREE CIRCULATION WITHIN GREATER BERLIN IS NOT INTERFERED WITH IN THE EASTERN SECTOR, JUST AS MY AUTHORITIES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING RECIPROCAL RIGHTS ARE ENJOYED BY MEMBERS OF THE SOVIET FORCES WITHIN THE UNITED STATES SECTOR OF BERLIN. MY AUTHORITIES EXPECT THAT THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES WILL TAKE APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO PREVENT THE REOCCURRENCE OF SUCH IMPERMISSIBLE INCIDENTS. END QUOTE.

3. ROMANOVSKIY MADE NOW-STANDARD RESPONSE. HE COULD NOT ACCEPT PROTEST, BUT WOULD TAKE IT FOR INFORMATION ONLY. IN PRESENT INSTANCE--AS IN SIMILAR CASES IN PAST--GDR AUTHORITIES AND NOT SOVIET EMBASSY WERE COMPETENT PARTY TO WHOM ANY PROTESTS OR INQUIRIES SHOULD BE ADDRESSED. GDR WAS, AFTER ALL, RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING AND CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BERLIN 01029 191209Z

POLICING ITS OWN "BORDERS." ROMANOVSKIY EXPLAINED THAT HE AND RODIN HAD INTERVENED ON BEHALF OF US AUTHORITIES ON JUNE 14 SIMPLY OUT OF "PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP" AND DESIRE TO BE OF ASSISTANCE-AND NOT OUT OF ANY SENSE OF OBLIGATION.

4. MISSION PROTOCOL OFFICER INSISTED ON SOVIET RESPONSIBILITY FOR EASTERN SECTOR OF BERLIN AND FOR

PROTECTION OF RIGHTS OF ALLIED MEMBERS OF FORCES WITHIN THAT SECTOR. PROTOCOL OFFICER ALSO STRESSED ANEW THAT IT WAS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE FOR MEMBERS OF US FORCES TO BE DETAINED FOR SEVEN HOURS AFTER SOVIET AUTHORITIES HAD BEEN NOTIFIED. ROMANOVSKIY ADMITTED THAT HE COULD NOT EXPLAIN LENGTH OF DETENTION AND THAT THIS SEEMED TO HIM UNJUSTIFIABLE.

5. ROMANOVSKIY ADDED THAT FACTS OF CASE AS RELATED BY GDR AUTHORITIES DIFFERED SIGNIFICANTLY FROM US ACCOUNT. US SOLDIERS, HE CLAIMED, HAD ACTUALLY SOUGHT TO DRIVE INTO EAST BERLIN THROUGH SONNENALLEE, AND HAD NOT SIMPLY ENTERED CHECKPOINT AREA BY MISTAKE. MISSION PROTOCOL OFFICER DISPUTED THIS ACCOUNT.

6. USCOB CONCURS.KLEIN

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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